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Letter dated 8 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the forthcoming briefing to the Security Council, which is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 11 May 2017, on the ongoing political crisis in Guinea-Bissau and the update on outcomes of the recent mission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to the country.

In this connection, I also have the honour, in Liberia's capacity as Chair of the Authority of Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States, to hereby transmit the final communiqué of the ECOWAS high-level ministerial meeting that took place in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on 23 and 24 April 2017.

Your assistance in circulating the present letter and its annex among the members of the Council for the impending meeting would be highly appreciated.

(*Signed*) Remongar **Dennis**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 8 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

1. In furtherance to the decision of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) taken at its fiftieth Ordinary Summit, held in Abuja on 17 December 2016, which urged all stakeholders of Guinea-Bissau to strictly respect and comply with the provisions of the 14 October 2016 Conakry Agreement, in particular compliance with paragraph 8 of the Agreement, a ministerial mission visited Guinea-Bissau on 23 and 24 April 2017, with the objective of assessing and evaluating the status of the implementation of the Agreement.

2. The high-level delegation was led by Marjon V. Kamara, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia and Chairperson of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, and comprised Naby Youssouf Kiridi Bangoura, Minister of State and Secretary-General of the Presidency of Guinea; Samura M. W. Kamara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone; Marcel A. de Souza, President of the ECOWAS Commission; Ambassador Mamadou Deme of Senegal; and the Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the Senegalese Diaspora of the Republic of Senegal, Mankeur Ndiaye.

3. The delegation set out for Bissau on 23 April 2017, following consultations in Conakry with Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea and ECOWAS Mediator on Guinea-Bissau and Chairperson of the Assembly of the Heads of State of the African Union.

4. On arrival, the delegation held consultations with the international community, including the members of the Guinea-Bissau P5 (ECOWAS, African Union, Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, European Union and United Nations) in order to receive their perspectives on the ongoing political situation.

5. On 24 April, the delegation held consultations with civil society organizations, including traditional and religious leaders, and women and youth groups. The delegation also met and had consultations with key political actors, including the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, José Mário Vaz; the President of the National People's Assembly, Cipriano Cassamá; the Prime Minister, Umaro El Mokhtar Sissoco Embaló; the leadership of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the Party for Social Renewal (PRS), the Union for Change (UM), the Democratic Convergence Party (PCD) and the New Democracy Party (PND); and representatives of the group of 15 dissident PAIGC parliamentarians.

6. The delegation took note of the briefings of the members of the Guinea-Bissau P5 and the deliberations with civil society and the relevant political actors. The delegation recalled the main decisions taken at the fiftieth Ordinary Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held in Abuja on 17 December 2016, and expressed grave concern about the inability of the political actors to implement the main provisions of the 14 October 2016 Conakry Agreement.

7. The delegation also reaffirmed the deep concern of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, and that of the international community, over the protracted political and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau as a result of the inability of political stakeholders to reach a lasting and consensual solution, leading to the current gridlock.

8. The delegation took note of the payment of several months of salary arrears and observed the worrisome deteriorating sociopolitical and security situation in the country, including the dysfunction of key State institutions and its dire impact on the citizenry; the increase in belligerent and incendiary political statements; and the frequent civil demonstrations and consequent rising tensions.

9. Taking note of the aforementioned, the delegation:

(a) Expresses its appreciation and commendation to the leadership of President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, Chairperson of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, and President Alpha Condé, ECOWAS Mediator, for their steadfastness and commitment to resolving the Guinea-Bissau political crisis despite provocations by some of the parties to the ongoing impasse;

(b) Notes that the Conakry Agreement has not been implemented by signatories and relevant parties;

(c) Recalls the decision of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS at its Ordinary Summit of 17 December 2016, and the immediate implementation of all the decisions in line with the letter and spirit of the Conakry Agreement endorsed by the African Union and the United Nations;

(d) Strongly requests the immediate cessation of all bellicose and incendiary pronouncements, identity incitements and the clampdown on peaceful demonstrations, and urges political actors to be circumspect in their public utterances and further refrain from direct personality attacks on the institution and leadership of ECOWAS and the Mediator, the African Union and the United Nations, as well as attacks through the media;

(e) Appeals to all political actors to take all necessary and immediate steps to ensure the functioning of State institutions and, consequently, requests the international community and development partners to redeem their pledges and commitments to the country to ensure optimal functioning of these institutions in the interest of the population;

(f) Commends the armed forces for their continued non-interference in the ongoing political crisis, and strongly urges the armed forces to maintain the same posture;

(g) Recalls the decision of the ECOWAS Authority to withdraw the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) by 30 June 2017, starting from 28 April 2017, and urges the international community to give all necessary support to ensure the full and seamless transition of security architecture to the national army. The decision to withdraw ECOMIB from Guinea-Bissau was officially communicated on 21 April 2017 to the President of the Republic by the Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf;

(h) Takes note of the readiness of the Government and PAIGC to engage in direct dialogue to ensure the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, and calls upon them to initiate such dialogue without delay;

(i) Recommends that, in the event of non-compliance or lack of concrete steps to implement these decisions within 30 days from this day, the Authority approve the imposition of relevant sanctions by all Member States and the international community on individuals, groups of individuals and entities who obstruct the smooth implementation of the Conakry Agreement and their close collaborators with immediate effect;

(j) Recommends that the Authority remain seized of the situation in Guinea-Bissau, and instructs the President of the ECOWAS Commission to transmit these

decisions to the African Union Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau for the attention of the African Union and the United Nations for information and appropriate action.

Bissau, 24 April 2017

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Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 2275 (2016) and paragraph 44 of Council resolution 2297 (2016). It provides information on the implementation of those resolutions, including on the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and challenges faced by the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) in carrying out its mandate. It covers major developments in Somalia during the period from 1 January to 30 April 2017.

II. Political and security overview

A. Political developments

2. The electoral processes for the leadership of the tenth Federal Parliament and for President of the Federal Republic of Somalia were major milestones on the country's path to becoming a fully functional federal State with stable political institutions. Mohamed Sheikh Osman Jawari, Speaker of the previous Federal Parliament, was re-elected Speaker of the House of the People on 11 January, while Abdi Hashi Abdullahi was elected Speaker of the new Upper House on 22 January.

3. The election of Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo" as President of the Federal Republic of Somalia on 8 February concluded the electoral process. The inauguration ceremony on 22 February was attended by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, the Presidents of Djibouti and Kenya, and other senior officials and representatives of Member States and relevant organizations.

4. On 23 February, President Farmajo appointed as Prime Minister Hassan Ali Kheyre, who was endorsed by the Federal Parliament on 1 March. On 29 March, Parliament endorsed the 68-member Cabinet, together with the new Government's agenda, whose key priorities include drought response, security, and fighting corruption.

5. In the tenth Federal Parliament, the House of the People maintains 275 clan-based seats, while the new 54-member Upper House consists of members elected by their respective State Assemblies. Women constitute 24 per cent of the House of the People, a significant increase from the 14 per cent of the previous Parliament. Overall, more than 50 per cent of the Members of Parliament are new. About 18 per cent of the elected Members are under 35 years old.

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6. Since taking office, President Farmajo has made official visits to Kenya, where he attended the Special Summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on protection and durable solutions for Somali refugees, and to Jordan, where he attended the twenty-eighth ordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level, as well as to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

7. On 20 February, the President of the HirShabelle Interim Administration, Ali Abdulahi Osoble, appointed a Cabinet comprising 52 ministers. While his attempt to balance clan interests faced initial resistance, the Cabinet was eventually approved by the HirShabelle Parliament on 11 March.

8. In Puntland, there were renewed protests by soldiers over the non-payment of salaries. Public dissatisfaction over the Puntland Administration's poor economic management and performance increased as a result of the drought situation. Revenues declined owing to a political deadlock with the Galmudug Interim Administration over the divided city of Gaalkacyo. To address public discontent, the President of Puntland, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali "Gaas", defended his government's achievements in a media interview on 5 March.

9. In the Interim South-West Administration, opposition elements in the State Assembly stepped up efforts towards a no-confidence motion against the President, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan. They accused the State President of neglecting the drought crisis and focusing on the federal presidential campaign and personal business interests. In response, Sharif Hassan met various opposition members of the Assembly to assure them that he would address their concerns.

10. The Galmudug State Assembly initiated an impeachment procedure against the State President, Abdikarim Hussein Guled, with 54 Assembly members approving the motion on 10 January. Although the attempt failed, President Guled announced his resignation on 25 February, citing health reasons. The changes in the federal and state-level leaderships could offer an opportunity to renew reconciliation efforts with Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a, which occupies the official capital of the State, Dhuusamarreeb. The Galmudug presidential elections have been delayed until 3 May.

11. The Jubaland State Assembly resumed its session on 3 April. In an address to the Assembly, the President of Jubaland, Sheikh Ahmed Islam "Madobe", reiterated his pledge to cooperate with the new Federal Government. He outlined his Administration's priorities, including combating Al-Shabaab, commencement of the Juba Valley offensive, as well as enactment of a law regulating land use.

12. The Gaalkacyo Ceasefire Team Advisory Group, which is supported by the United Nations and IGAD, continued to engage local authorities in Gaalkacyo. Although the main road linking the two sides of the city remained closed, mounting pressure from local communities compelled local authorities to reopen side roads. In January, my Special Representative brokered a public commitment for the then President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the then Prime Minister, Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, the Puntland President and the then Galmudug President to achieve three objectives: troop withdrawal, removal of all roadblocks and joint policing. As these commitments remain in effect, the joint patrols consisting of security personnel from both sides played a significant role in facilitating the withdrawal of militias, dismantling road blocks, and improving passage of humanitarian supplies through Gaalkacyo.

13. On 9 February, while congratulating President Farmajo on his election, the "Somaliland" Administration called for his commitment to talks between the Federal Government and "Somaliland". The lease of Berbera Airport for 25 years to

the United Arab Emirates to establish a military base caused demonstrations in Hargeysa and Berbera from 13 to 15 February. The Federal Government and members of the Federal Parliament have expressed concern over the deal.

14. On 6 March, the "Somaliland" House of Elders (*guurti*) voted to delay presidential, parliamentary and *guurti* elections until 13 November 2017, 28 April 2019 and 28 April 2020, respectively. The Somaliland public and opposition parties have widely criticized the delays, as have international partners, who have stated that they will not meet the costs of the elections arising from the postponements.

B. Security developments

15. In Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab failed to disrupt the electoral process, despite conducting two attacks there in January. On 2 January, two explosive-laden vehicles detonated near the Mogadishu International Airport, killing 16 people and injuring 23. On 25 January, four assailants launched a complex attack on the Daya Hotel, resulting in 38 fatalities and more than 50 injured.

16. No security incidents were reported during the presidential election on 8 February, but terrorist activities resumed the following week. On 16 February, four mortar rounds landed near Villa Somalia at the time of the presidential handover ceremony. On 19 February, a car bomb in a market area killed at least 34 people and injured 50. On 22 February, three mortar rounds impacted the same area, injuring four civilians. Al-Shabaab senior leaders have expressed hostility towards the new President and vowed to continue waging war on the Federal Government. On 13 March, two explosive-laden vehicles detonated near the former Jazeera Training Centre and in front of the Wehliye Hotel, killing 18 people and injuring others. Another car bombing at a checkpoint near the National Theatre on 21 March resulted in over 10 fatalities and more injured. In both cases, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility. On 16 April, a United Nations convoy on its way to a settlement of internally displaced persons in the outskirts of Mogadishu was nearly hit by a roadside bomb. A rear escort vehicle was slightly damaged and two Somali escort guards suffered minor injuries. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the bomb, stating that the United Nations was the intended target.

17. On 6 April, the President instructed the Somali security forces to prepare for a new offensive against Al-Shabaab and called on Al-Shabaab fighters to surrender within 60 days to be granted amnesty. He appointed new heads of the security services, including the National Intelligence and Security Agency, the Somali National Army, the police force and the Custodial Corps, as well as a new Mayor of Mogadishu, who also serves as Governor of Banadir. Against this backdrop, Al-Shabaab continued attacking government facilities and civilians in Mogadishu. On 9 and 10 April, four terrorist attacks in the city killed at least 12 national army soldiers and 18 civilians, injuring many more. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for a car bombing on 9 April near the Ministry of Defence, reportedly targeting the new Commander of the Army, and a suicide attack at the former Jazeera Training Centre on 10 April.

18. The Galmudug and HirShabelle Interim Administrations experienced increased insecurity due to clan conflict, political tensions, and Al-Shabaab activities. On 11 January, six people died and eight were injured in clashes between clan militias in Abudwak. On 17 January, two soldiers were killed and three wounded in an exchange of gunfire between Galmudug police and security forces in Cadaado. On 21 January, a hand grenade attack killed the Jawhar Police Division Commander.

19. Al-Shabaab guerrilla warfare continued in rural areas of central and southern Somalia. Attacks on Somali and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

forces were reported regularly along logistics routes. The most serious incident was a complex attack on 27 January on a Kenyan military base near Kulbiyow, Lower Juba region. More than 30 Kenyan troops were reported killed, although the exact figure remains unknown.

20. Puntland witnessed renewed armed conflict and acts of terrorism. Security forces clashed with Al-Shabaab fighters near the Galgala Mountains throughout January and February. In Boosaaso, suspected Al-Shabaab elements gunned down a traditional elder on 25 January. Three hand grenade attacks targeting a bank, a police checkpoint, and the Civil Court, on 24 and 26 February and on 4 March, respectively, resulted in at least five casualties. In Gaalkacyo, a Puntland parliamentarian was wounded in an Al-Shabaab car bombing on 8 March. Fresh activities by the splinter group professing allegiance to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) were reported in Qandala District. On 27 January, ISIL supporters abducted five Darawish soldiers at Karimo and beheaded three of them. On 8 February, four suspected ISIL affiliates attacked a hotel in Boosaaso, killing four members of a militia and two civilians.

III. Support for peacebuilding and state-building efforts

A. International coordination and political support

21. My Special Representative continued to play a key role in ensuring coherent and coordinated international support to Somalia's peacebuilding and state-building efforts. Through regular meetings with international partners, Somali leaders and other stakeholders, he helped to ascertain unified positioning and interventions by the international community around the goal of a successful conclusion of the federal electoral process and in initiating consultations with the new Government.

22. During the reporting period, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland convened three preparatory meetings of international partners for the London Conference on Somalia on 11 May. Partners have agreed that the Conference will discuss security and economic recovery through the lens of the national development plan and a new partnership agreement.

B. Inclusive politics

23. In February, the electoral process for the 329 Members of the House of the People and the Upper House of the Federal Parliament was completed. The indirect electoral process in Somalia was unique: approximately 13,000 appointed clan delegates elected their representatives to the Federal House of the People in the state capitals and Mogadishu. Subsequently, the outgoing ninth Parliament handed over its constitutional mandate to the next assembly in a democratic and dignified manner.

24. To promote transparency, UNSOM provided live stream coverage of the presidential election and the inauguration ceremony, which resulted in more than 250,000 views. The live streaming was used extensively by Somali and international media, and by 334 external websites and applications.

25. The elections for the Speakers of the two Houses of Parliament and the President of the Federal Republic were held in accordance with the interim rules of procedure adopted during the first joint session of Parliament on 27 December 2016. Twenty-one candidates contested the presidency, while 328 parliamentarians voted

in a secret ballot. It was the first time in Somali history that a bicameral legislature elected a Federal President.

26. The 2016 electoral process was extensively supported by the Integrated Electoral Support Group, which provided advisory, logistical and budgetary assistance. As part of its twin-track strategy, the Group also supported the long-term electoral capacity development of the National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia. The Group did so while concepts and processes are being explored to set the foundations for universal "one person, one vote" elections in 2020. These include laws pertaining to political parties and electoral security, the electoral legislative framework and a national identification programme that would include voter registration.

27. In this regard, a United Nations electoral needs assessment mission deployed to Somalia from 22 March to 4 April. The mission consisted of members of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), members of the Integrated Electoral Support Group, and electoral experts. The members of the mission met with various electoral stakeholders, including the National Independent Electoral Commission, the Prime Minister, the Speakers of both Houses of Parliament, the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Federal Affairs, civil society organizations and women's associations.

28. The needs assessment mission assessed progress and challenges pertaining to electoral preparations since the previous mission, in November 2013, including in relation to implementation of the United Nations electoral support mandate. The mission evaluated the political, legal, institutional, technical, human rights and security environment in Somalia, the legal and institutional framework, options for voter registration, and the capacity and needs of election stakeholders, particularly the National Independent Electoral Commission. It sought to recommend the parameters and nature of United Nations electoral support through UNSOM as a structurally integrated mission, in addition to resource requirements. The mission's findings and recommendations informed the formulation, through UNDP, of an election-related project document, which will define the new scope of work of the Electoral Commission.

29. The National Independent Electoral Commission has developed its 2017-2021 strategic plan, which outlines objectives, steps and challenges in preparing for universal elections. In a positive acknowledgement of its role, the Commission was invited by Parliament to attend the presidential election on 8 February, as an observer.

C. Rule of law and security institutions

1. Security sector assistance and reform

30. The new Federal Government has identified security sector reform as a key priority and initiated discussions with federal member states to reach a political agreement on a federal security model and architecture. From 6 to 8 March, an internationally supported workshop was convened to initiate dialogue on the Somali national security architecture. The workshop recommendations formed the basis for a high-level meeting between President Farmajo and the Presidents of the federal member states on 15 and 16 April in Mogadishu. The Federal Government and federal member states reached an agreement on the national security architecture, including on the relationship between federal and state-level security institutions and the overall size, distribution and composition, command and control, and resourcing and financing of the security forces of Somalia. This represents a

significant state-building achievement and a first step towards a new chapter in the rebuilding of the Somali security sector to allow it to assume increasing responsibility, as part of a conditions-based transition from AMISOM. It is envisaged that the political agreement will form the foundation for the security pact to be endorsed at the London Conference on Somalia on 11 May.

31. From 12 to 14 March, UNSOM facilitated the third weapons and ammunition management consultative process with the Federal Government and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. Participants explored the Federal Government's progress over the past two years in developing a comprehensive weapons and ammunition management system, including in national coordination, import procedures, marking, record-keeping, distribution, verification, and storage of arms and ammunition. The main parameters for a national framework of a commission to enable the Federal Government and federal member states to strengthen policies and procedures for managing arms and ammunition were also agreed.

2. Police

32. Implementation of the new federal policing model continued to gather momentum in the federal member states, including the establishment of technical committees responsible for developing policing strategies for 2017-2025, focusing on the deployment of sufficient trained police personnel to deliver basic policing services. Key priorities include increasing the police presence and its visibility at the state level and developing the capacity to deliver policing services to local communities.

33. Technical committees have been established in South-West, Jubaland, Galmudug and Puntland, membership consisting of senior regional officials and police. A technical committee for HirShabelle is expected to be established later in 2017, as is a joint technical committee comprising representatives of the Federal Government and the federal member states.

3. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

34. A rehabilitation centre for former Al-Shabaab combatants opened in Kismaayo on 1 March. Funded by Germany, the centre is the fourth facility to be established as part of the National Programme of the Federal Government for the Treatment and Handling of Disengaged Combatants. The centre offers psychosocial support, religious counselling and vocational training to help to reintegrate former Al-Shabaab combatants into their communities.

35. Meanwhile, UNSOM continued to support the Federal Government in implementing pilot reinsertion projects for disengaged Al-Shabaab combatants in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Kismaayo and Beledweyne, targeting 1,000 beneficiaries. Projects provide short-term employment opportunities and practical skills training to promote community reintegration.

4. Mine action

36. From February to April, the Mine Action Service conducted training activities for Jubaland police forces in explosive ordnance disposal and improvised explosive device awareness. Support also continued to Somali police teams in Mogadishu, South-West, Jubaland, HirShabelle and Puntland. In Mogadishu, police teams were able to neutralize 12 improvised explosive devices.

37. In response to the drought, the Mine Action Service is sensitizing state officials about the potential threats of explosive hazards to the drought-affected

population and supporting the Federal Government through direct training in mine-risk education to promote protection for the population at risk from explosive hazards.

5. Justice and corrections

38. The annual workplān for 2017 of the Somalia Joint Rule of Law Programme was agreed in principle in March. With a multi-partner trust fund budget of around $8 million, it focuses on facilitating agreement among Somali stakeholders on a justice and corrections architecture and service delivery, mainly at state level, in accordance with the priorities of the Federal Government and donors.

39. During the reporting period there was a geographical increase in justice delivery with mobile courts for the first time in Jubaland and South-West. The United Nations, together with Mogadishu University, supported two workshops to finalize training courses on 10 subjects, which will be used to build judicial capacity across Somalia.

40. From 25 to 27 February, UNSOM supported the Custodial Corps in convening a workshop on the Onkod Plan, the strategic plan to develop the corrections service. Discussions focused on the legal and regulatory framework, command and staffing structures, location of prisons and resource requirements. The final plan is expected in the coming months.

6. Maritime security

41. In March and April five incidents of piracy were recorded off the coast of Puntland and Galmudug, the first such incidents in Somalia since May 2012. Notably, on 13 March on the north-eastern coast of Puntland, a group of self-declared Somali fishermen hijacked a Comoros-flagged oil tanker near Alula and demanded ransom for the release of eight Sri Lankan crewmen. Puntland maritime police forces reached Alula on 16 March, but local clan elders successfully negotiated the crew's release without ransom payments. On 2 April, pirates hijacked an Indian commercial vessel en route to Boosaaso from Dubai and took it to the Ceel Huur area. Galmudug forces were able to rescue the crewmen on 10 April. Puntland and Galmudug mounted security operations in coastal areas in an effort to curb the potentially resurgent piracy threat. NATO ended its counter-piracy operations in December 2016, while the European Union Naval Force has significantly reduced its presence in the high-risk area off the coast of Somalia.

D. Economic foundations

42. The drought has affected all economic activity in the country, including agriculture, pastoralism and fisheries. Weak public capital investment is a critical binding constraint on protecting livelihoods from climate-related shocks in a weather-dependent economy. Basic water infrastructure and management could also have mitigated the current drought.

43. As a result of the drought and its impact on economic activity, Somalia's trade imbalance continued to widen. The temporary ban imposed by Saudi Arabia on livestock imports from Somalia on suspicion of Rift Valley fever in December 2016 contributed to this trend. Since livestock accounts for about 80 per cent of total exports and losses in many areas are estimated at 60 to 70 per cent, the drought will have a serious and persistent negative impact on the economy because of declining livestock prices and reduced exports.

44. This is likely to exacerbate an already dire socioeconomic situation, with half of the population (51.6 per cent) living below the international poverty line. Inequality remains high, driven by the differential between urban (45.0 per cent) and rural (52.3 per cent) poverty versus that of internally displaced person settlements (70.1 per cent).

45. Nonetheless, with continuing support from the international community, economic growth is projected to increase between 2017 and 2019. Driven largely by consumption, Somalia's gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at $6.2 billion in 2016. Due diligence for larger scale infrastructure investments is nearing completion, so that private sector investments are expected to increase in 2017. A priority requirement will be to address the legal and regulatory framework restraining private sector development, especially for the banking sector.

E. Revenue and services

46. While starting from a low base, public expenditure has expanded almost fivefold in recent years, from $35.1 million in 2012 to $170.5 million in 2016 (2.8 per cent of GDP). Domestic revenue remains low at around $113 million, international trade taxes accounting for 68 per cent of the total.

47. Although Federal Government revenue has been increasing, it remains too low to sustain core government functions. Municipal and several state authorities have increasingly played a bigger role, but most service delivery is still undertaken by non-governmental organizations and the private sector with the support of international agencies.

48. Somalia is in debt distress, with significant arrears that make it ineligible for financing from the International Development Association and other concessional financing sources. In turn, this blocks financing of national programmes necessary to lift millions out of food insecurity, vulnerability, displacement and poverty. Somalia needs to normalize its relations with international financial institutions to access concessional financing. Development partners, international financial institutions and the Federal Government are working to develop a clear and comprehensive road map towards debt relief.

49. Somalia continues to build a track record of reform under the International Monetary Fund staff monitored program, which gives it an opportunity to establish a foundation for arrears clearance and debt relief when conditions allow. Reduction of poverty and inequality will require additional reforms, including more equitable access and improved quality of education and health services, as well as sustainable infrastructure and social protection programmes customized to fragility.

50. While the federal leadership and state Presidents made some progress towards defining the respective roles and responsibilities of the federal and state authorities in 2016, appropriate arrangements for policy and legal development governing service delivery, standard-setting, and oversight by the public sector are still lacking.

F. Cross-cutting issues

1. Community recovery and local governance

51. The United Nations supported international efforts to help communities to recover and rebuild links with their governments. On 20 March, the Joint Steering Committee of the Peacebuilding Fund approved the annual workplans and budgets

for the *Dalidhis* ("build your country") and *Midnimo* ("unity") projects, focusing on service delivery and sustainable integration of returnees, respectively. The Somalia Stability Fund undertook infrastructure projects in Hobyo, Xuddur and Berdaale, which generated employment. In Jubaland, UNDP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization helped youths to bolster employment prospects and initiate microenterprises through the provision of vocational training and cash grants. The Jubaland Ministry of Women, Family Affairs and Human Rights participated in the ground-breaking of a new marketplace on 19 February in Afmadow town with the support of USAID.

52. On 8 March, at the meeting of the Steering Committee of the United Nations Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery, the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Federal Affairs, representatives of federal member states and United Nations agencies discussed priorities for 2017, which include supporting the formation of district councils aimed at strengthening local governance and improving service delivery. They approved funding of a workplan aligned with the Wadajir National Framework for Local Governance.

53. My Special Representative convened a roundtable meeting on 12 April in Mogadishu with all stabilization and governance stakeholders from the international community to reaffirm their commitment to and accelerate implementation of the Community Recovery and Extension of State Authority and Accountability concept.

2. Human rights

54. The number of human rights violations decreased during the reporting period: 646 civilian casualties were reported, including 287 deaths and 359 injuries. Overall, security forces were responsible for 150 civilian casualties, of which 54 deaths and 35 injuries were attributed to Somali security forces, while 20 deaths and 41 injuries were attributed to AMISOM.

55. Civilian casualties attributed to Al-Shabaab or unidentified persons totalled 134 deaths and 200 injuries, a 46.5 per cent increase from the previous reporting period. Al-Shabaab abducted 36 persons, 15 of whom were later released.

56. The Puntland Military Appeals Court continued reviewing the cases of Al-Shabaab and ISIL suspects sentenced to death by the First Instance Court. Since January, 25 death sentences have been commuted, representing 66 per cent of the death penalties pronounced in 2016. Fourteen death sentences were issued in the first quarter of 2017, 11 by military courts. Eight of the defendants were affiliated with Al-Shabaab, three were members of the Somali security forces and three were civilians.

57. Twenty-eight cases of conflict-related sexual violence were documented, an increase over the 13 cases reported during the previous reporting period. This is likely to be related to the displacement of populations due to the drought and lack of access to humanitarian assistance. Women and children are particularly vulnerable, and the number of reports of sexual violence in internally displaced person camps has increased.

58. Threats against freedom of expression increased: 61 persons were arrested, including 35 protesting against a judicial decision in Puntland, and 13 were arrested for criticizing decisions made by officials on the Berbera Port in "Somaliland". Two media workers were beaten by security forces in Gaalkacyo and one human rights defender was charged with a criminal offence for collecting signatures demanding an end to police impunity. Fourteen killings of individuals participating in the electoral process were documented, three of which were claimed by Al-Shabaab and 11 attributed to unknown assailants. One of the incidents in the Lower Shabelle

region involved the public execution on 20 March of an elder captured by Al-Shabaab, reportedly because of his participation in the electoral process in Baidoa. Following UNSOM advocacy with the Director General of the Ministry of Internal Security on 26 March, the National Intelligence and Security Agency released a detainee held in custody without charge since 25 October 2016, first by AMISOM in Beledweyne and then by the Security Agency in Mogadishu.

59. From 11 to 13 February, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights visited Somalia to discuss the human rights situation, including implementation of the human rights due diligence policy, and the centrality of human rights and protection to political and security strategies.

3. Gender equality and women's empowerment

60. Women represent 23 per cent of the new Cabinet — 6 of 26 portfolios — a 100 per cent increase compared to the number of female ministers in the previous Cabinet. Of the 329 members elected for the Federal Parliament, 80 (24 per cent) are women.

61. With UNDP support, the first annual Somali Women Parliamentarians Conference was held on 24 and 25 April. Women members of the Federal Parliament and State Assemblies discussed how to fulfil their constitutional duties and bring women's issues to the national agenda.

62. On 8 March, with the support of the United Nations, women affairs ministries and civil society observed International Women's Day in Mogadishu, Garoowe, Kismaayo, Baidoa, Beledweyne and Gaalkacyo. At an event in Mogadishu, co-hosted by the Federal Government, the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development recognized the contribution of the United Nations and AMISOM in attaining 24 per cent representation of women in Parliament.

63. In Gaalkacyo, taking advantage of the occasion of International Women's Day, women leaders gathered authorities and citizens from both sides of the green line to promote peace in the troubled region. Through a friendly football match, they engaged youths to spread the message of peace and solidarity. The event paved the way for further dialogue and underscored the important role of women in peacemaking.

4. Child protection

64. The country task force on monitoring and reporting documented 431 grave violations affecting 397 children (332 boys and 65 girls) in 148 verified incidents. Public executions of children and hand amputations continued: five children were killed and three were maimed. Continued abductions by Al-Shabaab for recruitment purposes were reported, and there was an alarming incident of "graduation" of 167 boys, aged between 10 and 13, from a training centre in Lower Shabelle region.

65. The country task force continued to support awareness-raising and screening efforts by the Child Protection Unit of the Somali army. From 26 February to 2 March, a joint Federal Government, United Nations and United States mission to Kismaayo and Dhobley screened 2,269 soldiers, including 1,569 Somali army soldiers and 700 members of the Darawish forces, all of them adults.

66. On 26 January, a military court in Boosaaso reversed the death sentences of 10 children for their alleged association with Al-Shabaab and issued 20-year prison terms instead. Following sustained advocacy with Puntland authorities, 36 children sentenced to prison and detained in Boosaaso and Garoowe were transferred on 2 April to a reintegration centre supported by UNICEF.

5 Prevention of sexual violence

67. As the number of incidents of sexual violence often rises during emergencies, the United Nations has scaled up relevant prevention efforts beyond its core programming, through both advocacy with the Federal Government and training of United Nations staff and AMISOM. The vulnerability of women and girls in particular has been exacerbated by increased displacement of populations from rural to urban areas. Between January and March 2017, the gender-based violence subcluster partners reached a total of 17,353 beneficiaries (including 3,102 girls, 2,236 boys, 9,062 women and 2,953 men) with prevention, response and capacity-building activities. Sexual and gender-based violence response services include lifesaving medical assistance, such as post-rape treatment, legal, psychosocial, material and livelihood assistance, and temporary protection accommodation for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. In an effort to foster a holistic integrated medico-legal response to sexual and gender-based violence, the "Somaliland" Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), organized training in March 2017 to strengthen capacity to implement the localized medico-legal toolkit on sexual and gender-based violence as adapted from a global one issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNODC.

6. Targeted sanctions

68. In his briefing to the Security Council on 13 April, the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea highlighted the latest findings of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, including the assessment that Al-Shabaab remained the main threat to peace and security in Somalia. On 21 April, when presenting its midterm update to the Committee, the Monitoring Group also highlighted its assessment that the ISIL militant faction loyal to Abdulqadir Mumin and active in the Bari region of Puntland has grown significantly in strength over the reporting period. The Monitoring Group further drew attention to the peace and security threat posed by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including the potential re-emergence of piracy in Somalia.

G. Humanitarian situation

69. The humanitarian situation deteriorated at an alarming pace and the risk of famine continues in 2017. On 28 February, the President of the Federal Republic convened a high-level round table on drought response and declared a national disaster, urging international and national stakeholders to redouble efforts to avert a catastrophe. The communique issued at the end of the meeting announced the adoption of a policy of zero tolerance for any diversion of humanitarian assistance and included a pledge to take firm action against anyone engaging in such corrupt practices. It also highlighted the vital role of the private sector in supporting the delivery of humanitarian supplies.

70. Some 6.2 million people face acute food insecurity, and nearly 3 million require urgent life-saving assistance. The Protection and Return Monitoring Network led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has recorded over 570,000 new drought-driven displacements since November 2016. As at 30 April, there were 36,066 cases of acute watery diarrhoea/cholera, including over 697 related deaths; the case fatality rate was 1.2 per cent, above the emergency threshold of 1 per cent. The recorded number of measles cases is also on the rise. Prices of staple food surged in January, and declining livestock prices and

increasing cereal prices have sharply depleted terms of trade for pastoralists, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

71. On 27 February, the Humanitarian Coordinator opened a drought operations coordination centre in Mogadishu, bringing together cluster coordinators to facilitate and coordinate response, strengthen information-sharing and address gaps. In March, regional drought operations coordination centres were opened in Baidoa and Garoowe.

72. Thanks to generous resources provided by donors, national and international non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies are massively scaling up humanitarian response throughout Somalia in coordination with authorities. The number of people reached with improved access to food has increased to 1.7 million, up by 62 per cent from 1.1 million people reached in February. A significant scaling-up of nutrition services is also under way, and 332,000 children and women were treated in March, including 69,000 children under 5 who were severely malnourished. Humanitarian non-governmental organization and United Nations partners have also scaled up delivery of safe water and reached nearly 1,150,000 people from January to March with water trucking and supplies of storage tanks and bladders, more than doubling the number of people reached in February. Water, sanitation and hygiene and health partners are working jointly with the acute watery diarrhoea/cholera task force to contain the spread of the outbreak. More than 194,500 people, including 114,500 women, were provided with primary and secondary health-care services, an increase by 65 per cent from the 126,000 reached in February. However, while the scaling-up is significant, the overall targets have not been met and the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate.

73. Insecurity continued to impede access to people in need, mainly in southern and central Somalia. More than 35 violent incidents affected humanitarian organizations from January to March 2017 leading to two deaths, six injuries, five abductions and three arrests of humanitarian workers. Humanitarian supplies were looted in parts of "Somaliland", HirShabelle and South-West states. Discussions are ongoing with authorities to address the looting of aid.

74. On 7 March, I visited Somalia with the Emergency Relief Coordinator. We met with the President and federal authorities to discuss the drought, and travelled to Baidoa, where the crisis is most intense. The visit generated extensive international and local media coverage.

75. On 18 February, the humanitarian country team issued an operational plan for prevention of famine, requesting $825 million to reach 5.5 million people from January to June 2017. Donors have moved quickly to contribute $580 million to scale up humanitarian action.

76. Following lessons learned from the 2011 drought, robust risk management capacity has been put in place to minimize diversion of humanitarian aid. An increased use of cash assistance (constituting around 50 per cent of assistance in major aid sectors), which draws on the strong private sector role, contributes to stabilizing markets and has improved the ability to scale up assistance and reach beneficiaries in remote areas. Access issues, including roadblocks and administrative impediments, are more systematically mapped and addressed through engagement with federal and local authorities, as well as traditional leaders.

II. Support to the African Union Mission in Somalia, the Somali national army and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

77. UNSOS continued to provide logistics support to AMISOM and the Somali national army in Mogadishu and the sectors as mandated by the Security Council. The support included training 736 AMISOM personnel in various areas, including radio operations, countering improvised explosive devices, Internet protocol video surveillance, gender, medical and predeployment training, with a view to improving their effectiveness. UNSOS also provided logistics support for the electoral process in Somalia, including support to AMISOM troops and police personnel deployed to monitor the process in Cadaado, in Galmudug, where the United Nations previously had no presence.

78. The United Kingdom contingent deployed in support of UNSOS, comprising engineers, medical, logistics and equipment support, has proved useful in its respective areas of expertise. The team has trained more than 1,000 AMISOM troops in various fields. Of significance is the collaboration with the Burundi contingent, culminating in a two-month training and mentoring to launch "Operation Antelope" in Sector 5 of the AMISOM operational area of responsibility.

79. UNSOS continued to operationalize the mission enabling units within AMISOM, and has established a pilot mission enabling unit in Sector 5 under the leadership of Burundian troops, with training and mentoring from the United Kingdom contingent. As a result, the main supply routes in Sector 5 have been significantly improved and secured. Once fully implemented across all AMISOM sectors, the mission enabling units project is expected to improve the remaining main supply routes and facilitate the transportation of supplies by road, as well as trade and humanitarian access in the sectors.

80. The ongoing technical support and training of AMISOM troops by the Mine Action Service is enhancing their efforts in finding and destroying a greater number of improvised explosive devices on main supply routes than in previous years. This has resulted in fewer deaths and injuries to personnel and less damage to assets. Between January and March, there were 39 improvised explosive devices targeting AMISOM, 13 of which AMISOM teams identified and destroyed.

81. On 24 January, the 22nd meeting of the AMISOM Military Operations Coordination Committee was held in Addis Ababa, and discussed, inter alia, the expansion of AMISOM and Somali national army offensive operations in Somalia. Consequently, a planning meeting was held in Addis Ababa on 27 and 28 February to review the operational plan for the conduct of the expanded offensive operations in the Juba Valley corridor and north-eastern coastline areas. UNSOS continues to participate in joint planning meetings led by the African Union aimed at developing a comprehensive and sustainable plan to ensure that the security, political and development tracks are aligned.

82. As part of its activities to commemorate the tenth anniversary of AMISOM, the African Union conducted a comprehensive lessons learned exercise in Nairobi on 9 and 10 March, which reviewed progress made by AMISOM since its inception, challenges encountered and the way forward, including the Mission's exit strategy. A joint United Nations-African Union review of AMISOM is expected to contribute to defining future cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in restoring peace and security, and advance a conditions-based transition of lead responsibility for security to Somali institutions.

83. During the reporting period, Somalia experienced an outbreak of cholera, including in areas where AMISOM personnel are located. While UNSOS informed the African Union of its responsibility to ensure that uniformed personnel were vaccinated prior to deployment, it provided urgent vaccination assistance, in collaboration with WHO, to bridge the existing gap — 95 per cent of AMISOM troops had not received a vaccination against cholera — given the potential for exposure of AMISOM and United Nations personnel, especially in high-risk areas.

84. In addition, UNSOS took a series of measures to support efforts to mitigate the effects of the drought, including installation and maintenance of the drought operations coordination centre in Mogadishu. Efforts were undertaken to ensure that those involved in drought response had access to UNSOS flights. UNSOS also instituted water-rationing procedures as an internal measure to ensure judicious use of water.

85. The United Nations human rights due diligence policy task force discussed the draft risk assessment for the integration of Puntland defence forces into the Somali national army. The approval of the risk assessment and proposed mitigation measures was deferred, pending clarification of the modalities and specific areas of United Nations support. The United Nations-AMISOM Joint Working Group on human rights due diligence policy also reviewed the implementation of mitigation measures and highlighted the response to allegations of violations by AMISOM as a concern during its meeting on 14 February. AMISOM stated that it would provide updates on alleged violations upon completion of its investigations.

86. Further to supporting AMISOM in developing standard operating procedures for the Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell, UNSOS is recruiting an international consultant to track and report on civilians affected in the course of AMISOM offensive operations. This will help to enhance the Mission's compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law, in accordance with the human rights due diligence policy.

I. United Nations presence in Somalia

87. The security risk level for the area protected by AMISOM at Mogadishu International Airport has remained high since the previous assessment was conducted in February. UNSOS continued to implement recommended risk mitigation measures to improve the safety and protection of all United Nations personnel. Similar projects are continuing in the United Nations regional compounds.

88. As at 30 April, there were 519 international and 1,149 national United Nations personnel throughout Somalia. An increasing number of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes operate and maintain a permanent presence of both international and national personnel outside Mogadishu. This number is likely to grow further as a result of humanitarian response to the drought (the staff ceiling in Baidoa was raised from 29 to 40 to facilitate humanitarian response). Insecurity remains the biggest impediment to these operations. The restricted access to some areas poses a challenge to the ability to respond to humanitarian and development needs.

89. The Security Council in resolution 2275 (2016) requested the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the United Nations presence in Somalia after the 2016 electoral process, to ensure that the United Nations is properly configured to support the next phase of state-building in Somalia, and to present options and recommendations to the Security Council. The United Nations initiated a strategic assessment in November 2016 which included a thorough situation analysis,

stocktaking of the United Nations engagement and proposals for a way forward. The proposals were reviewed jointly by Headquarters and the field during a strategic assessment mission deployed from 5 to 15 March to Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. I will transmit the results of the strategic assessment in a letter to the President of the Security Council on 5 May.

IV. Observations

90. The current reporting period has seen a sequence of remarkable events, which gives the people of Somalia and the international community considerable hope for the future of the country. The peaceful election of a new President, widely accepted as legitimate, and the relatively quick nomination and endorsement of a Prime Minister and a Government set the course for political progress. The agreement reached on 16 April by Somali leaders at both the federal and state level on the architecture and accountability of Somali security forces should lay the ground for the development of the Somali security sector. These developments provide a strong basis for strengthening the Federal State and enable further progress towards peace, security and stability. I commend the Somali federal and state authorities for these important achievements.

91. The electoral process was far from perfect and reflected the absence of institutional and accountability systems and the prevalence of corrupt practices. However, it had strong electoral features and many contests were correctly conducted, and the results were accepted as legitimate. The countrywide euphoria greeting the election of the President of the Federal Republic on 8 February is a clear indication of the acceptance of the outcome as legitimate by the Somali population.

92. Somalia now has a new Federal Government that has been welcomed across clan lines. The Government must build on this vote of confidence in dealing with its many urgent priorities, including drought response, security, public finance management, fighting corruption, increasing revenues and advancing the constitutional review. Its priorities also include institutional reforms which will help to address some of the deficiencies witnessed during the electoral process.

93. I commend the former Federal President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, for graciously conceding defeat and facilitating a smooth transition. The peaceful transfer of office and absence of acrimony set an example that other countries in the continent and beyond should follow.

94. I welcome the commitment of President Farmajo and the Prime Minister Kheyre to work together harmoniously and to respect the division of responsibilities between their offices. This is critical if Somalia is to avoid the power struggles between President and Prime Minister that adversely affected stability and the business of government during the previous administrations.

95. Somalia's federal system is in its early stages and will need to be consolidated over the coming years. This process may initially exacerbate long-standing grievances. This, in turn, underscores the need, and the historic opportunity, to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the federal and state governments. I call on the Federal Government and Parliament to advance the constitutional review process including through meaningful and inclusive participation of the regions, civil society and other stakeholders. If well managed, the constitutional review process will promote national unity, address long-standing drivers of conflict and instability and offer an important opportunity for reconciliation.

96. The humanitarian situation remains deeply worrying and could become worse still. It has the potential to derail political developments and the legitimacy, in the eyes of the public, of federal and state institutions and office holders.

97. During my visit to Somalia on 7 March, I saw for myself both the promise that Somalia holds and the enormous challenges that lie ahead. The people I met are in dire need of support as humanitarian actors rush to scale up assistance made possible through resources provided by donors. I was encouraged by the engagement and commitment of the Somali authorities to accountability, and to increasing access and removing obstacles to effective response. I was also impressed with the measures taken by the humanitarian system under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator to adopt a famine prevention posture and rapidly scale up assistance, as funds become available. Humanitarian actors are working in one of the most difficult and dangerous environments globally. Resources are now becoming available through the generous support of donors. Somali authorities at all levels have not only expressed but have also shown commitment to stem the slide towards famine. This is essential to ensure that assistance is not diverted or misused and reaches those in the greatest need.

98. The challenges are enormous. Top among them is access. Al-Shabaab continues to restrict access to those in need of assistance and aid to populations in areas under its control. It is unacceptable that humanitarian assistance, particularly for women and children, is disrupted or denied as a means of conflict.

99. Improving security for Somalia, including in the context of better responding to the drought, is a major priority. In 2017, AMISOM reaches the tenth anniversary of its deployment, and the Mission will not remain indefinitely in Somalia. Therefore, progress in building Somali security institutions is urgent. I welcome the political agreement reached on the national security architecture in April as a milestone to accelerate implementation of wider security sector reform, to which the international community should be ready to provide swift and coherent support. Implementation of the agreement should start without delay, with enhanced and better coordinated international support. Progress in the security sector should ultimately allow the Somalis to take over security responsibilities, with a conditions-based transition of AMISOM. At the same time, we must provide AMISOM with predictable support in order to increase its effectiveness and facilitate its joint operations.

100. Enabling the movement of AMISOM is key in that regard. I appreciate the support provided by the United States and United Kingdom Governments towards the establishment of the mission enabling units and call for additional donations to accelerate establishment of the units in the remaining sectors. UNSOS capacity to build on this momentum and establish the mission enabling units is reliant on the troop-contributing countries providing requisite troops and appropriate capabilities. More critically, it is essential that the troop-contributing countries work together with UNSOS and the Mine Action Service to open the main supply routes, as mandated by the Security Council.

101. I wish to extend my appreciation to those Member States that have contributed to the Somali National Army Trust Fund, enabling UNSOS support to Somali troops in joint operations with AMISOM. However, both the army and AMISOM trust funds currently have very low balances, of just over $10 million and $387,000, respectively. I urgently appeal to Member States to consider making contributions to the trust funds.

102. Despite ongoing efforts by AMISOM and Somali security forces, Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat. It has shown resilience and adaptability, recovering from challenges and drawbacks while maintaining a united core in spite of internal

squabbles and fracturing. The group's tactical evolution and growing level of sophistication in its execution of complex terrorist operations in urban and rural settings are a testament to that. Al-Shabaab has also exploited the drought to promote its own propaganda objectives. I am especially concerned about the group's willingness to resort to violent means to hinder relief activities targeting civilians and aid workers, including the United Nations.

103. While the human rights situation remains grave, I am encouraged that all death sentences pronounced against children in Puntland have now been revoked. I am deeply concerned, however, that the death sentences were transformed into long prison terms. I urge the Puntland authorities to meet their commitments to overturn the sentences, facilitate the release of the children and continue to work with the United Nations on their reintegration. I also call upon the Puntland authorities to revoke all death sentences against children issued by civilian and military courts and urgently develop, with the support of the United Nations, a juvenile justice system in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

104. Infringement upon the freedom of expression continues to be of concern; there is continuing harassment of journalists, politicians and human rights defenders because of their criticism of government authorities. Freedom of expression is an essential foundation of a democratic society and a free media helps to foster dialogue, peace and good governance, key imperatives for the new Somali Government.

105. I call on the Federal Government and the "Somaliland" Administration to resume talks and resolve issues that stand in the way of harmonious relations. I am concerned about continued delays in both the presidential and the parliamentary elections in "Somaliland". This is steadily eroding the promise and increased credibility that "Somaliland" held in its democratization process. I call upon the "Somaliland" Administration to revisit the electoral cycle and establish a timeline through inclusive consultations.

106. I thank the African Union, AMISOM, IGAD, the European Union, Member States, non-governmental organizations and other development partners for their continued support for the peacebuilding and state-building process. I pay tribute to AMISOM, the Somali security forces and allied militias for the sacrifices they continue to make in Somalia in the interest of long-term peace and stability in the country and beyond.

107. I pay tribute to my Special Representative, Michael Keating, my two Deputy Special Representatives and the staff of UNSOM, the Head of UNSOS and his staff and also the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Somalia for their continuing hard work under challenging conditions.

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